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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dr. H. S. Craig

DATE: May 18, 1955

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SUBJECT: "Summit Conference"

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1. The promise of a "Summit Conference" is no matter for rejoicing. It is the result of a tactical retreat on the part of the Soviets, combined with a psychological offensive in which the words "coexistence" and "relaxation of tension" have achieved wonder at our expense. But now that we are saddled with this conference, the worst mistake would be to approach it in a negative fashion. We must take the offensive and in the first place organize ourselves for this offensive.

2. There should be one single person, assigned without publicity to, and made responsible for: (a) coordinating all intelligence required for the preparation of the conference; (b) advising on maximum and minimum positions which the President will carry into the conference; (c) supervising coordination of these positions with our allies; (d) advising on psychological preparation for the conference both in U.S. and abroad; (e) advising on economic and political tactics to be taken between now and then to improve further our negotiating position with regard to our allies and to the Soviet Union. This person should be one of the President's Advisers having direct access to him, able to report to him on every phase of the preparation, and having authority to communicate the President's view and to settle differences among agencies, especially with regard to phases (b), (d) and (e). Unity of direction in the White House is required for a Conference in which the President will be a direct participant. The principle of unity of direction is further justified because, whether we want it or not, the existence of a 4-power conference will be the most important datum of our foreign policy for the next three months. If responsibility for the preparation of the conference is dispersed, as it may well be, among agencies and committees, none will dare to budge, the conference will be a stumbling block in our foreign policy, and our negotiating position will weaken. If we decide that other policy goals have to be temporarily subordinated to the goal of maximizing our negotiating advantage for the conference, we will have unity of purpose in our political effort. The assignment of a single "administrator" is the proper means of subordinating other political goals to that of achieving the maximum advantage at the conference. This assignment being made, the various parts of our administrative set-up will fall right into place. Liaison arrangements with the Merchant Group, the Stassen Group, the NSC, the OCB, its working groups and the various agencies can be established without difficulty under a single administrator. Without such a central point, the difficulty of establishing such liaisons on a multilateral basis will destroy the effectiveness of any preparations.

3. The phases of preparation have been outlined above in the listing of the responsibilities of the single administrator. Steps to be taken from now on can hardly be described more concretely at the present time, because there remain too many unknown factors, for instance: the result of British elections and the forthcoming position of the British Government, the meaning of Soviet

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leaders' visit to Tito, the effect of Krishna Menon's mission to Peiping, the progress of the Formosa crisis, that of the Indochinese and North African crises, and their impact on the French emotions, the development of internal difficulties, especially food problems, in the Communist world. It should be the responsibility of the "administrator" to follow these developments and to orient accordingly the preparations of the "Summit Conference". Very little advice can be supplied at this stage on what the orientation should be, except that the situation has changed since the Berlin Conference of 1954, and that we should approach the problem of "talking to the Soviets" in an entirely different spirit.

4. We have apparently what U.S. policy has sought to achieve ever since 1947: a negotiation from a position of strength. Secretary Dulles says that the ratification of the Western European agreement spells the greatest defeat of Communism since the war. This may not be saying much. The only thing we know is that a Communist tactical withdrawal (Chou's "conciliatory" attitude, the Austrian Treaty) coincided with a manifestation of Western strength, namely the ratification of the Western European Pact. Of the relation of cause and effect between these two phenomena, we know nothing. The Soviet moves may be inspired by our strength, by their internal weakness, or by consideration of economy of forces, which leads them to narrow to the space of a conference table the scope of their political warfare. We must be prepared for all these eventualities. Assuming that our strength has been impressive, or that the Communists feel weak, we must show the fair play and the magnanimity that befits victors. In order to negotiate we must have something to negotiate, and this of course leads to a reexamination of our basic policies in Europe and in the Far East. For the problem is not any more to hold a position until the Soviets show some good will. They have shown what we said in Berlin we would consider as a manifestation of good will. We must know what we are now prepared to give and what we can safely give without endangering our allies and the national consensus which must back President Eisenhower at the "Summit Conference". In this process, we must keep in mind that the Soviet moves are always tactical and that a reversal to former policies is always possible. This all means that some decisions of high policy have to be made, without which no preparation of the conference, psychological or otherwise, can be undertaken.

5. There are, however, certain things we should do immediately regardless of whether it is possible or not to establish the set-up discussed in the preceding paragraph and to secure the political decisions just mentioned. These things refer on the one hand to the cementing of the Western alliance, and of our relations with the uncommitted nations of the world. I do not think that improvement in this field can be brought about by denunciations of Soviet intentions or any further expose of the Communist threat. The Soviet tactical move has kicked the props from under alliance-making machineries of that kind. There remains, however, many ways of strengthening the alliance by other political and economic means. Although the present Mutual Security Bill and H.R. 1 give us very little leeway, a good deal could be done through promises of increased trade to our friends, if only through the timely passage of a Custom Simplification Act and in the nuclear energy field. Some review of our policies on military bases might also lead to better understanding with the French. All these things have to be done quite promptly because the remaining time is short.

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6. On the other hand, we have an excellent opportunity for turning what has been up to now a propaganda failure into a success. The key to the present situation is the word "coexistence". The invention is a masterpiece of Communist propaganda. In a sense, we are still knuckling under its impact. For obviously we cannot say that we are against "coexistence", or that we do not "coexist". The point is, however, that coexistence has an entirely different meaning in Communist parlance and in our own. According to the best authorities, but unbeknown of the general public, Communist "coexistence" features three important mental reservations; it is limited to a certain "historical era", it is exclusive of subversive practices on the part of the "Capitalist" powers but not on the part of the Communist powers, it is predicated on the faith that Communism will some day resume its course and conquer. In the existence of these mental reservations lies our cue. They have never been exploited and they should be exploited in connection with this Conference. For instance, the President could address the nation at a proper time and define an American approach to "coexistence", somewhat along these lines: "This is what the Commies call coexistence. They have a right to think that their system will some day encompass the world. But so do we. And it is because we are firmly convinced of the superiority of freedom over tyranny that we can afford to renounce conquest and subversion as methods for making our system prevail. If, even for a limited period of history and in limited places, our opponents are honestly prepared to do the same, there is hope to reach agreements which will secure peace for some years to come. This is the limited objective which we set for ourselves in the negotiations we are going to enter. We do it with full understanding of the dangers involved, with full vigilance, but we do it because we know that peace will work for the free world".

7. To sum up: As a maximum program I propose a centralized set-up to orient the conference; as a minimum, I think that we should throw the propaganda ball of "coexistence" back into the Communist lap.